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MONTHLY REVIEW

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VOL. 45
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THE RIGHT TO EMPLOYMENT

Sumner Rosen

NATIONALISM AND PROGRESSIVE POLITICS IN INDIA

Randhir Singh

FRIGGA HAUG'S *BEYOND FEMALE MASOCHISM*

Martha E. Gimenez

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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

It is our custom to record in this space the deaths of friends, colleagues, and authors who have helped us or otherwise contributed in one way or another to making *Monthly Review* the kind of institution it has become in its nearly forty-four years of publication. With a mixture of gratitude and sorrow, we add the following names to the list.

Marta Fuentes died on June 21st at age fifty-six after a long illness, in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Marta was an outstanding Chilean radical and feminist whom we got to know in the period during the 1960s when a Spanish-language edition of *MR* was published, first in Argentina and later in Chile. She married Andre Gunder Frank, author of many books, including the landmark study *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America* (published by MR Press in 1967). After their marriage Marta and Gunder worked together, publishing jointly and separately an impressive list of studies dealing with such subjects as underdevelopment, the world system, and feminism. She is survived by her husband and two sons, Paulo and Miguel.

Edward P. Thompson died on August 28th at age sixty-nine after an extended period of failing health, in Worcester, England. Thompson's magnum opus *The Making of the English Working Class* set a new standard for the writing of working-class history which has been enormously influential

(continued on the inside back cover)

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THE RIGHT TO EMPLOYMENT

by SUMNER M. ROSEN

The more our economic problems bring to mind the depression of the 1930s the more interest focuses on the policies that the New Deal deployed to cure that depression and prevent future depressions. Among the most innovative, daring, and effective were the programs of direct job creation under Harry Hopkins. At their peak they enrolled between five and six million people, unprecedented then and unparalleled since. The largest postwar effort under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act in the 1970s numbered about 750,000 public service jobs.

Philip Harvey's book, *Securing the Right to Employment: Social Welfare Policy and the Unemployed in the United States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), asks what would happen if we restored and updated these programs. Using data from the so-called prosperous 1980s on jobs, joblessness, welfare dependency, and involuntary part-time and low-wage employment, he calculates that we could have achieved authentic full employment (defined as an average unemployment level of 2 percent) by creating 10.4 million public service jobs in 1986. This would have eliminated structural and cyclical unemployment. Only frictional unemployment, a product of normal turnover in the labor market, would have remained. Annual full-time earnings of those enrolled would have averaged $12,809, 46 percent higher

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than full-time earnings at the minimum wage, $4,072 above the official poverty level for a family of three in that year. Total costs would have included direct wages, health benefits equivalent to the options provided to federal employees, child care for welfare (AFDC) families, and expenditures on tools, equipment, and supplies equal to one third of the total cost for direct labor. Total costs for 1986 would have been $142.5 billion. If taxes due from those employed are deducted from this figure, the cost would be reduced to $112.1 billion. And if the costs of unemployment insurance, welfare payments, Medicaid, food stamps, and other program expenditures are deducted, the net outcome as Harvey calculates it would have been $12.7 billion *less* than was actually spent in 1986, and $60 billion less than was actually spent over the 1977-1986 period. In addition, the economy would have had significantly higher production of goods and services, and society would have reaped major benefits: more people at work would have meant less dependency, alienation, social tension, and political polarization. If a share of the fruits of these added earnings had been used to improve urban conditions, create new housing, improve access to health care, and integrate young people into the mainstream economy, the level of social decay and disarray today would be far lower than it is.

Harvey is frank in recognizing that these are estimates based on a retrospective examination of a ten-year period and relying on assumptions that reality might well have altered. But the argument is on the whole careful, detailed, and as persuasive as any such intellectual exercise needs to be. Many of his assumptions intentionally err in the direction of maximizing the costs; even so, the calculations yield an outcome that would have generated major benefits at modest costs. There is much here for a job- committed administration to ponder seriously. Harvey provides a benchmark for assessing realistically the commitment of a Democratic government to the historic heritage of achieving and sustaining full employment. He demonstrates that in fulfilling this goal, direct job

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creation by government would be necessary, feasible, and effective.

Harvey is both an economist and a lawyer. His book begins with the legal argument that the right to a job is embedded in the structure of natural rights, and is either explicit or strongly implicit in our legislative history. His citations include Franklin Delano Roosevelt's call for an economic bill of rights in his 1944 State of the Union message, including "the right to a useful and remunerative job" and "the right to earn enough to provide adequate food and clothing and recreation." He describes the two federal laws of 1946 and 1978 dealing with employment policy, recalling that early drafts of both laws emphasized the right to a job and the obligation of the government to enforce it. This argument has been developed in Richard L. Siegel's forthcoming book, *Employment and Human Rights—The International Dimension* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994). As the human rights discussion increasingly addresses social and economic issues these issues will be aired more than in the recent, unlamented heyday of laissez-faire capitalism.

There is another book waiting to be written on this subject. Its thesis is that the obligation of government to utilize direct job creation in pursuit of full employment is a reflection of the failure of market economies to generate a sufficient level of employment at sufficient levels of earnings, opportunity, and job security. A government committed to the same full employment objective might first establish and enforce standards of behavior and decision-making on private capital—and particularly the large, concentrated, globally-oriented corporate and financial firms—focused on their job-creating, job-destroying decisions and choices. Public policy would apply incentives and rewards, penalties and obligations, analogous to those used in enforcing standards of environmental protection, consumer health and safety, and protection of investors' savings. Like the environmental impact statement now required before investment or land-use decisions may be implemented, employers would be required

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to develop "employment impact" statements whenever a decision about location or relocation, change of methods, scale, and process involved significant effects on jobs, skills, and earnings.

It would constitute a major achievement to bring to pass Harvey's proposals that government create the jobs necessary to achieve and sustain full employment. It would be more difficult, but perhaps more important, to place the responsibility for our continuing shortfall of adequate jobs with adequate pay, benefits, security, and opportunity where it belongs—on the private, largely unaccountable decisions and policies of the firms that dominate our and every other Western economy.

The last time this set of questions was a serious matter of public discussion was more than half a century ago during the Great Depression. Roosevelt ultimately was persuaded that there was a link between stubborn depression and what he called "a concentration of economic power without equal in history." In 1938 he established the Temporary National Economic Commission (TNEC) to investigate the connections in depth and to propose remedies that would ensure that private, unaccountable economic power would never again play this role.

The post-war political and ideological struggle was at root an effort, largely successful, to discredit and dismantle the structures of economic management that had been initiated during the New Deal. A major achievement was the elimination of direct job creation in favor of Keynesian macromanagement that relies exclusively on fiscal and monetary tools for achieving and sustaining full employment without inflation. Keynesian doctrines were developed in the immediate post-war years by Alvin Hansen and other American disciples of Keynes, and enshrined as orthodoxy in the many editions of Paul Samuelson's economic textbook, first published in 1948.

The proposals to dismantle the structures of corporate financial power exposed during the three-year span of the

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TNEC never saw the light of day. By 1941, when the final report was issued, the depression had begun to yield to war-based prosperity and the reform of American business and banking had been shunted aside in favor of an all-out effort to raise production for the war. The only post-war survivors of New Deal innovation were Social Security and its associated programs of income support. They had two virtues: (1) they helped to mend and heal the human costs of market-based enterprise, and (2) they served as counter-cyclical economic stabilizers in the Keynesian mold. The post-war economic structure of power and decision-making was essentially unchanged from the pre-war configuration.

Post-war prosperity relied on a "social contract" between business and society. Under its terms, business power remained intact and unchallenged. In return business recognized labor unions, accepted the levels of taxation necessary to meet society's social needs, provided adequate jobs at decent pay, and produced goods and services providing good value to the millions of families participating in mass prosperity for the first time in our history. Since the 1967-1973 period this prosperity has slowly but inexorably turned into stagnation and decline, reflected in rising levels of unemployment and underemployment, increased and intensified poverty, sharp escalation of inequalities in the distribution of income, and massive public debt. Mainstream economists have utterly failed to grasp the dimensions of the shift, and public policies have more often exacerbated these trends and the forces behind them than they have sought to reverse them. Even in the 1992 election campaign, when Bill Clinton focused on the economy and won, the economic remedies highlighted at the Little Rock "summit" echoed the Keynesian and market orthodoxies of the post-war decades. No one acknowledged that the post-war social contract has been breached while those who profited from it continue to dominate the corporate and economic structure. Their triumph, echoed in mainstream economic writing, has been to implant in the public mind the views that celebrate market mechanisms and denigrate the

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role of government as the central instrument for ensuring that the economy operates for the benefit of the masses of people even when that requires curbing and controlling corporate power.

The economy of the 1990s is vastly different from that of the Great Depression and the New Deal. Its scope is global; its center is more financial than productive; it empties cities of viable economic activity; it wastes resources on a massive scale; it imperils the environment. As for the job question, today's economy generates increasing disparities between a hard core of well-paid, secure jobs and an increasing periphery of job insecurity, low pay, intermittent work, denial of benefits, and lack of opportunity, overlaid with dimensions of race and gender.

Can New Deal measures and New Deal thinking help us to cope with these destructive forces? Harvey offers a serious, positive answer to one dimension of that question. We need to go further, in debating the role and legitimate power of government to articulate, conserve, and promote the long-term needs and rights of people. Jewish sages argue that the Sabbath was made for man, not man (or humankind) for the Sabbath. We need to assert and specify what it means to say that the economy was made to meet the needs of people, rather than the opposite. At a minimum the time is overdue to restore the ability and legitimacy of government to insist that private power be subordinate and accountable to the public interest.

Harvey cites a vision that Keynes expressed in an article he wrote in 1933 for the *Yale Review:*

> If I had the power today, I should most deliberately set out to endow our capital cities with all the appurtenances of art and civilization on the highest standards of which the citizens of each were individually capable, convinced that *what I could create I could afford* and believing that money thus spent not only would be better than any dole but would make unnecessary any dole. For with what we have spent on the dole in England since the war we could have our cities the greatest works of man in the world. (Emphasis added.)

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Modern capitalism in the United States is distinctly unfriendly to our large cities. Decentralization of economic life and shrinkage of federal support for urban needs have combined to place cities at unprecedented risk of serious, even irreversible economic decline and rising levels of social pathology, unrest, and violence. What Keynes had to say sixty years ago speaks to the role of the state as the key in setting national goals and priorities, and committing the resources needed to realize them. The most important needs of a society need not coincide with, and may be directly contrary to, the priorities of private enterprise. The economic viability of cities is one such need. Other cases are familiar, or will become familiar, as the excesses of aggressive, profit-hungry capitalism make their mark on our social and economic condition. In the areas of environmental protection, workplace conditions, consumer safety, and others a consensus has already begun to develop, not only within but across advanced economies in the West. These issues have become part of international discourse and negotiations among governments and private interest groups.

In the context of a global economic crisis the idea that full employment can be assured in one country, even one as large as the United States, appears less plausible than was the case when Keynes was teaching the governments of the West how to tame the business cycle and to sustain high levels of employment. Nevertheless, much can be done to reduce overall levels of unemployment in the United States significantly and permanently, and to narrow the vast differences in the risk of unemployment and underemployment facing the educated and the uneducated, whites and blacks, men and women, experienced workers and new entrants to the labor force, suburban and urban residents. Increasing numbers of irregular, contingent, and part-time workers are the result of private business decisions, not of inexorable demographic and global trends that governments are powerless to counter. There is a range of measures by which we are able to influence

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the overall level of demand and employment as well as direct regulatory, labor market, and tax incentive tools that have been developed over the past half century by modern governments. In this inventory we have available a set of policies that would bring us as close as we can get to the goal of full employment. Towards this end, the task of changing the behavior of the modern business firm in its relationship to conditions of the labor market would merit a high priority. So would the concept of direct job creation, pioneered sixty years ago by Harry Hopkins and persuasively restored and modernized in Philip Harvey's book. These are lessons that President Clinton needs urgently to learn.

The Editor's Comment

Although it isn't our practice to run book reviews in this space, an exception was made this time because of the persistence of severe unemployment and to draw attention to the massive job- creation program undertaken by the New Deal during the 1930s. The material benefits and dignity gained by the millions then employed in public jobs and the contributions their work made to society are an eloquent testimonial to what militant mass movements and a responsive government can achieve even in a capitalist environment.

But the New Deal experience also taught other lessons that should not be ignored—lessons about the limits of reform in a capitalist society. The prevailing wisdom in the 1930s assumed that the extensive investment in public works and the direct creation of jobs under the Works Progress Administration would before long pull the private economy out of its doldrums, that capitalist enterprise would soon recover its vigor. But the common sense of those days proved to be wrong. Despite increased attempts by Washington to get the private market to allocate resources for increased employment, almost 20 percent of the labor force remained unemployed ten years after the onset of the Great Depression.

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Government intervention did indeed help sustain the demand for consumer goods and to some extent relieved the personal misery created by the depression. One thing, however, government intervention did not and could not do: it did not get capital to do its part. Capitalism's rules of the game have nothing to do with the common interest. That became crystal clear in the stagnating world economy and the enormous excess capacity during the Great Depression. Thus, in 1939, private nonresidential capital investment was only about half of the 1929 level! Some investment was needed just to replace worn- out equipment. But as for growth and expansion, there was only one rule that business obeyed: invest when expected profit opportunities are lush. And the consumer demand stimulated by the New Deal measures just couldn't do the trick.

As is well known, what finally turned the economy around was the outbreak of war in Europe followed by U.S. involvement in what soon became the Second World War. Massive government intervention revived capitalist enterprise. It was an intervention that had nothing to do with satisfying people's needs, creating useful jobs, or improving the country's infrastructure. It achieved wonders by feeding armament orders to corporations, providing them with new plant and equipment, and assuring them fat, guaranteed profits.

In our opinion, Sumner Rosen's conclusion overlooks the chief lessons of the New Deal as well as post-Second World War history. He maintains that modern governments have developed over the past half century that can influence the overall level of demand and employment and thus bring about near full employment. As we see it, the evidence of the past fifty years proves just the opposite. Economists and government officials may have kidded themselves that their manipulations caused the expansion of jobs and the growth of industry in the early postwar decades, when in fact that wave of prosperity was due to special stimuli provided by postwar reconstruction, arms buildup, wars, and the spread of techno-

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logical innovations. Once these stimuli lost their steam, all the tricks of the economists' trade could not hold back the downslide to stagnation during the past two-and-a-half decades. More and more, mass unemployment has become the rule, and welfare programs have been cut back regardless of whether the social democrats, liberals, or conservatives are in charge.

Liberal/social democratic schemes don't get anywhere when they interfere with the rules of the capitalist game, rules that evolved and became entrenched to protect the power and privileges of capital. Although capitalism can be flexible up to a point (as during the 1930s), and under certain conditions bend to pressures produced by militant mass struggle, it is vain to think that it can be flexible enough to voluntarily give up its ultimate power.

Our argument is not aimed at discouraging struggle for reforms to protect against the ravages of capitalism. Quite the opposite. We believe that the struggle will be more meaningful and effective if undertaken without the illusion that capitalism can be transformed into a decent society.

I find many men in our dangerous age who seem to be in love with misery and death. . . . They think that hope is irrational and that, in sitting down to lazy despair, they are merely facing facts. I cannot agree with these men. To preserve hope in our world makes calls upon our intelligence and our energy. In those who despair it is very frequently the energy that is lacking.—Bertrand Russell

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NATIONALISM AND PROGRESSIVE POLITICS IN INDIA

by RANDHIR SINGH

In historical terms, nationalism is not in itself progressive or reactionary, secular or communal, democratic or authoritarian, or anything else that can be expressed in simple categories of better or worse. It all depends upon its specific character, its program and leadership, and above all else, its concrete historical context. Nationalism in India before 1947 was indeed progressive, but under a different, more advanced class leadership it could have been radical, even revolutionary, because it aimed at resolving the basic structural contradictions concentrated in imperialism, whose resolution alone could clear the path for the Indian people's continuing struggle for a better future.

But nationalism need not have been so in the post-1947 period, for the settlement of 1947 had its own harsh logic. It is customary in conventional scholarship to take a liberal, linear view of the historical process in India around and after 1947. In this view, the Indian "nation-in-the-making" is seen as winning political freedom in 1947 and then moving on to

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Randhir Singh is a retired professor of political science at the University of Delhi and a National Fellow at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study.

This is part of a major address that was given at a cultural-political festival, *Babean da Mela*, in memory of the martyrs and heroes of the Ghadarite uprising of 1914-1915. An English translation of the entire speech was published under the title, "In Memory of Punjab Revolutionaries (1914-1915)" in *Mainstream* (February 20 and February 27, 1993). This selection is being published with the permission of the editors of *Mainstream*..

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win economic freedom—a movement which forty-five years hence is still on. The real historical process, however, has been dialectical. In the very manner in which the contradictions with imperialism were resolved, the transfer of power involved no basic economic or social-structural change, but put new, now Indian ruling classes in control of state power. This made the Indian people's struggle for economic freedom primarily a struggle against these new ruling classes. This is where, increasingly, the basic structural contradictions of Indian society have now come to be located. The new rulers have used the state to facilitate a historically specific form of capitalist development in the country, even as they continue to maintain many of the old exploitative and oppressive structures of Indian society.

These systemic contradictions are of decisive importance for all revolutionary strategy; though I must hasten to add that within the same systemic context, it is always possible for the ruling classes to make good or bad choices and to pursue better or worse economic, political, cultural, and other policies, and that this is a matter of great tactical significance for any revolutionary politics.

Social reality is invariably much too complex to be easily or fully understood or grasped by social theory. Marx's social theory recognized this. His achievement was to provide what still remains, with all its problems and inadequacies, the best point of entry into understanding the systemic character of social formations by suggesting that society be viewed as a totality, a historically specific, contradiction-laden structure with interdependent parts, within which one part—the economic structure—decisively conditions every other part or aspect of society: its politics, morality, culture, indeed the dynamics of its whole life.

The Indian social formation is possibly the most complex in the world, with its continental dimensions and extraordinary diversities of economic and social life, its long, relatively continuous history, its colonial legacies, and all sorts of other material, cultural, and ideological survivals from the past. For

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understanding the systemic character of this much-too-complex social formation, two passages from Marx, their different contexts notwithstanding, may still be helpful for their suggestiveness. He wrote:

> In all forms of society there is one specific kind of production which predominates over the rest, whose relations thus assign rank and influence to the others. It is the general illumination which bathes all the other colors and modifies their particularity. It is a particular ether which determines the specific gravity of every being which has materialized within it.

Elsewhere he spoke of countries which

> suffer not only from the development of capitalist production but also from the incompleteness of that development. Alongside modern evils, a whole series of inherited evils oppress us, arising from the passive survival of antiquated modes of production with their inevitable train of social and political anachronisms. We suffer not only from the living but from the dead.

Thus in these forty-five post-colonial years, if capitalism has grown apace and become increasingly pre-eminent in the Indian economy as a whole, it has also been a specifically Indian form of belated capitalist development, "some strange kind of corrupted capitalist growth," in Romesh Thapar's words. It has produced its particular propertied classes, big bourgeoisie, and kulaks-cum-capitalist farmers, increasingly dominant in the industrial and agrarian sectors of the economy. Around them has grown a coalition of other main beneficiaries. Among these beneficiaries are the semi-feudal landlords and speculating businessmen, professionals in the public and private sectors (including the higher echelons of civil and military establishments), organized white collar workers, and the "political class," which, even as it serves as a broker for various interests within the system, has turned politics itself into an almost hereditary, very lucrative business. Together they constitute, broadly speaking, the ruling power structure in the country.

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Just as the structural logic of British imperialism meant the accumulation of wealth in England and poverty in India before 1947, the structural logic of Indian capitalism is most manifest today in the unequal and uneven development within the country, in the emergence of the now universally admitted "two nations," and a certain "internal colonialism" in the more backward parts of the country. Its historical specificity has given it a strong comprador and lumpen character, presided over as it is by a bourgeoisie born old without ever having known youth.

The recent turn from state-supported to explicitly market-friendly capitalism only means that the predatory as well as comprador-lumpen nature of Indian capitalism will now manifest itself even more openly. Higher growth rates are promised, but if and when they do not materialize it will only be a case of "the economy is doing fine, the people are not," as a president of Brazil's military government once reported in Washington. Harvard economist Robert Reich's phrase, "the secession of the successful," well expresses the structural logic of the market economy.

Almost everyone in our country these days, from the hack politician to the so-called intellectual, on the left as much as on the right, is busy urging almost everyone else to join some mythical "national mainstream." So far nobody has told us what it is and where it flows. Accompanying this urging is a deep anxiety and concern about national integration. There are desperate daily exhortations to promote and strengthen it. What is forgotten is that today every aspect of social life in India bears the signature of this historically specific Indian form of capitalist development: its mark is there on our morality, our culture, our politics, on everything, everywhere. Therefore, if there is indeed a "national mainstream" it bears the imprint of India's corrupt and corrupting capitalist development. The fact to be deplored is not that we are not integrated, but that we are integrated in the capitalist way, which, with its unequal and uneven development, carries within it strong disintegrative tendencies.

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The Indian state, given the economic weakness and lack of legitimacy of the post-colonial bourgeoisie, has certainly acted as "the executor of the economic necessities of the national situation," as Engels once phrased it. It has facilitated, as V.K.R.V. Rao has pointed out, "a type of capitalist development in the interests of a narrow section of Indian society," but it has failed to serve as an agent of equity and distributive justice for the people.

It is not adequate to describe the state, as the Communist left traditionally does, primarily in terms of "an instrument" or "an organ." We need to recognize, on the one hand, that class domination is not monolithic where there is an alliance or a coalition of ruling classes with conflicting interests, and on the other, that the material and ideological structures of the modern state that are today far too many, are massively diverse, and are scattered all over vertically and horizontally to make the state itself a possible arena of class struggle. The metaphor of "instrument" or "organ" can be quite misleading. It fails, for example, to make sense of the role of a Louis Bonaparte, a Bismarck, or the Czarist state, and it certainly obscures the possibility that the state might have relative autonomy from any given ruling class or classes, which it must have precisely in order to manage and promote the common interests of the ruling classes.

But a proper Marxist view of the state must see it as the organizer of society in the interest of the class-exploitative structure taken as a whole, and this includes, as Gramsci put it, "the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules." This is indeed how the Indian state has functioned over these forty-five years; it is above all in this sense that it has been and continues to be a class state.

All those who seek a genuine radical or revolutionary transformation of Indian society, including those involved in grass roots activism or new social movements, will do well to recognize this harsh fact about the class nature and power of

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the Indian state. Those who would leave the state alone, as a certain kind of radicalism suggests, need to know that the state will not leave them alone.

Democracy in India, whatever its limitations and however weak or fragile it may be, is a hard-won achievement of the Indian people, and they certainly need it more than the ruling classes do. It has served to curb the authoritarian political logic of the Indian economic system and has brought benefits, however marginal, to the common people. They must certainly struggle to defend, preserve, and expand it. And they have so struggled all these years, as best they could. Yet as Bagehot observed with obvious satisfaction in an earlier, more honest age: "Democracy is the way to give the people the greatest illusion of power while allowing them the smallest amount in reality."

Obviously, democracy has not meant effective political power for the Indian people. Within almost two decades of Indian freedom and democracy, even so sympathetic a scholar as Gunnar Myrdal, who was a personal friend of Nehru, wrote of "the new government's role as the successor to the British *raj*." Pointing out that "India is ruled by a select group of upper-class citizens who use their political power to secure their privileged positions" and that "the power struggle has mainly remained one between individuals and groups in the upper class in the broader sense," he concluded that, "democracy has not enabled the majority of poor people to grasp, and organize themselves for utilizing, political power to advance their own interests." In 1973, V.K.R.V. Rao spoke of,

> a political alliance of the intermediate classes with the upper class, resorting to socialist ideology only to win mass support but using all levers of power to facilitate a type of capitalist development in the interest of a narrow section of Indian society.

How, despite democracy, the reality of power has remained with the ruling classes, not only in India but elsewhere too, how "the taming of democracy," as it may be called, occurs is not my concern just now. Suffice it to state here that the fact

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that this has happened and that the wide gulf between people and political power that democracy has come to mean is not only universally recognized in contemporary capitalist-democratic systems, but has been defended and actually celebrated in bourgeois social science as democracy itself. With a slight exaggeration one could even argue that the most important if not the sole discovery of modern political science, its ultimate wisdom on the subject is, "If you want to have democracy, or to save it, keep the people away from it!" Though in fairness to Aristotle I must add that he had discovered and said as much, far more honestly and intelligently, more than two thousand years ago.

Be that as it may, the point I want to make is that where the people have failed, the rulers everywhere have succeeded eminently: they have been able to use democracy to advance their own interests. Democracy is particularly useful to the ruling classes in two ways: it helps ensure their hegemony in society, legitimizing their class domination as never before, for now they exploit the people and rule over them with their own consent; and it provides the ruling classes with an impersonal, non-arbitrary device for articulating and resolving their inevitable internal conflicts of interest, even as the democratic state promotes these interests as a whole.

This two-fold usefulness of democracy to the ruling classes has been central to India's democratic politics since independence. In the earlier Nehru era, the golden-age of the post-colonial state, this politics was conducted through political formations, the dominant Congress and the rest, more or less as a "Hindu Undivided Family," on the basis of a working consensus among the beneficiaries of the system as a whole. But after the economic crisis of the mid-sixties, and subject to the continuing constraints of the economic situation since then, the family has been badly divided and the beneficiaries have been engaged in an utterly unscrupulous, no-holds-barred infighting for power and pelf in the state, where the end is used to justify literally any means. It is thus that the inept and myopic rulers have been producing intractable problems

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for themselves and one tragedy after another for the people, as in Punjab, each of which soon comes to acquire an autonomous logic and dimension of its own. Perhaps the rulers can indulge in this reckless and fratricidal "politicians' politics" (Malraux's phrase), which has much undermined the legitimacy of both their politics and the political system as a whole, because they face as yet no significant threat of a "people's politics" from below.

If India's national economy has been generating any number of potentially explosive issues, the national politics pursued by the ruling classes in recent years has been regularly turning the issues into problems, the problems into running sores, and these sores into tragedies for the Indian people. Nationalism today conceals the essential character of Indian social reality as it has come to be as a result of capitalist development. Nationalism not only serves to cover up the historic default of the post-colonial ruling classes in India, it increasingly turns into a legitimizing ideology for those classes that need to defend and safeguard their economic and political domination. By obscuring the most basic division in our society, between us (the people) and them (those who exploit and oppress us), nationalism even permits the latter to get away with plain lies to justify their policies and politics. Witness, for example, the lie that was the well-orchestrated national chorus to launch the recent surrender to global capitalism: "the country has been living beyond its means." A good majority of our people have simply no means at all to live, and most others have little that might allow them to indulge in any "living beyond." The nationalist lie provides a cover for those who have indeed been living beyond this country's poor means for too long and are now set on continuing to do so via the "free market," those whom the Latin Americans have learned to call the "anti-nation within the nation."

Nationalism is certainly being used by the ruling classes and their diverse political formations today to defend their crisis-ridden rule. The more the crisis deepens, discontent

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mounts, disruption and disorder spread, and the ruling class' legitimacy is undermined, the louder become the exhortations in the name of nationalism or patriotism. All of which reminds one of what Marx once spoke of as "the opium of patriotic feelings," which the ruling classes find useful for their purposes, especially in troubled times.

It is my argument that a simplistic, essentially ahistorical nationalism, the internalizing of a nationalist as against a Marxist perspective in theory and practice in the post-independence period, has virtually disarmed the Communist left, depriving it of the "independent political position" that Marx always emphasized and Lenin repeatedly endorsed as absolutely necessary for revolutionary politics. In the absence of independent left politics, all joint actions or united fronts end up only serving the needs of the ruling classes. The bogey of sectarianism and even political immaturity is raised to deny the need for an alternative politics and to condone any and every kind of opportunist practice.

In fact socialism itself has come to be seen as an adjunct of national aspirations. The left here has argued that it is not through capitalism but socialism that national development can be realised. And this leaves socialism very much a utopian affair. In a Marxist understanding, socialism is born of the irrationality and contradictions of capitalism. It is not just another "vision" of a good society, but the negation of capitalism. As long as capitalism lasts, socialism necessarily remains on the agenda of humankind. There is thus always the need to analyze the irrationality and contradictions of capitalism which generate the conditions and forces for socialist politics. A nationalist perspective which obscures this need, which is unwilling or unable concretely to analyze the contradictions of India's historically specific form of capitalism cannot provide for socialism as an historically viable project to struggle for. Such a perspective fails to locate the main victims of Indian capitalism's irrationality, injustice, and inhumanity, those who, having gained the requisite revolutionary consciousness—having "won the theoretical awareness of their

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loss," as Marx put it—will be the driving force of a socialist struggle.

It needs to be clearly understood that the struggle for socialism in India is a process of class struggle in the proper Marxian sense. It eschews narrow economistic or reductionist interpretations. But even if this struggle were viewed as a national struggle of the Indian people, it could be nothing else but fighting the anti-nation within the nation, or rescuing the nation from its ruling classes, and thus remains in its essential content, a class struggle.

The national task, that of recovering India for its people, yet remains a class task. This task is certainly linked with the unity and integrity of India, because at the present historical juncture this is a precondition for the advance of the Indian people's struggle for socialism. But insofar as a capitalist economy and ruling-class politics are the major sources of the present threat to the unity and integrity of India, its defence too is a matter of class struggle. And this struggle requires no opium of patriotic feelings, only a socialist commitment to the cause of the Indian people.

The absence of serious class politics in our country has meant that at a time of a festering economic, social, and moral crisis, which has sharpened all the conflicts and contradictions within Indian society, the political system today, however well it may have functioned once, is unable to find any effective solutions. The motions of electoral politics only hide the reality of a political gridlock which is pushing our society into ever deeper crises.

It is the people, left entirely at the mercy of the politics of the ruling classes, who suffer. They are the victims and it is they who are paying the real costs. Ideologically disarmed and disoriented, they daily breathe in and internalize a ruling class ideology which is seldom, if ever, all of one piece, but is constituted of all sorts of competing and even contradictory doctrines which supplement one another in their practical implications and serve the same ruling class interests. The people struggle as best as they can. Their discontent is finding

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expression in all sorts of ideologically muddled protests around genuine grievances and in any number of divisive and disruptive developments all over the country. Unable to fight the right battles, they fight the wrong ones. Unable to move forward in a revolutionary manner, the people are inevitably moving backwards. Politics, I believe, is where answers to the problems facing our people are to be found. The failure of the Communist left here is its real tragedy, part of the larger tragedy of the Indian people.

A nationalist perspective on politics, as against a Marxist class perspective, is not the only reason for the Communist left's failure to develop an independent politics for the Indian people. Participation in parliamentary politics poses many still-unresolved and almost intractable problems for those seeking a revolutionary transformation of Indian society. If, as a general principle, such participation is necessary, whenever and wherever possible, it always needs to be subordinated to extra-parliamentary class and mass politics, whose rich and complex array has to include what I would describe as a Communist variant of Gandhi's "constructive program," something never easy to achieve, yet imperative for any success in the struggle for hegemony in society.

Peoples' power grows only out of their own activity, organization, and struggles, and out of the revolutionary consciousness these come to be suffused with. Parliamentary politics, on the other hand, exercises a most "civilizing" influence on revolutionaries, as Laski was fond of pointing out. It is symbolic of the tragedy of the Communist left that when looking for "the most outstanding parliamentarians," the custodians of bourgeois politics and their media have increasingly come to discover them among the Communist leaders. And even as these leaders are happy garnering awards and accolades, their followers are moving away from the Party and the Indian people from parliamentary politics itself!

But the problem of parliamentary politics is not the subject I want to pursue here. I would, however, like to deal with one factor which is in a way linked to and supplements

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the surrender to bourgeois politics on the question of nationalism. I am referring to the philosophical surrender on the part of the Communist left to the dominant bourgeois mode of thinking, which Engels described as the "metaphysical mode of thought." Writing on the subject in *Anti-Dühring*, he noticed that "at first sight [the metaphysical] mode of thought seems to us extremely plausible because it is the mode of thought of common sense." But he found it to be "one-sided, limited, abstract" because it studies things "in their isolation, detached from the whole vast interconnection of things; and therefore not in their motion, but in their repose; not in their life, but in their death." He added that "in contemplating their existence it forgets their coming into being and passing away." This is the mode of thought which has come to govern the theory and practice of the Communist left, and this philosophical surrender has inevitably led to a surrender to bourgeois politics.

It is a mark of the dominance of ruling class politics in India over these forty-five years that after an early, much confused Communist protest, this class has always succeeded in effectively defining the terrain of Indian politics, setting the parameters of intellectual discourse and political action, and imposing its own issues and choices, concepts, language codes, and forms of politics on others. In the process it has appropriated, marginalized, and suppressed whenever necessary any alternative radical or revolutionary politics.

What I want to suggest is that it is the dominance of the "metaphysical mode of thought"—even among those on the left who otherwise profess the dialectical mode—which has over the years helped the ruling classes to preemptorily define the terrain of Indian politics for their own purposes. They have posed the issues in this mode, asked the questions accordingly, and secured the answers they wanted to have. Are you for the Sikh- Kashmiri-ULFA militants or for the nation? For violence or democratic politics? For Congress government or that of the Janata Party or the National Front? For communalism or secularism? It is not difficult to see that in

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each case the choices are really foreclosed in the sense that whatever the answer, it serves one or the other kind of ruling class politics. The way the issues are posed consistently ignores the larger socio-historical context and deeper determinant interconnections, dissociates the issues from any consideration of socio-economic structures, class domination, or ruling class politics, and thus ensures that radical or revolutionary choices simply do not come up as potential answers, as real historical possibilities. Given the specific narrowmindedness of this essentially-ahistorical metaphysical mode of thought, a strategy and political practice geared to it are impossible.

The failure to see Indian social reality in the whole of its interconnections, to recognize its issues, processes, and problems in their real relationships with the economic basis and with each other, the structured interdependence of parts that make up Indian society—the recognition of which is basic for a revolutionary strategy—this failure is obscured by essentially imaginary substitute relationships of a "national whole" which the nationalist perspective postulates for Indian society. Once during the Nehru era, the era of post-independence possibilities, this postulation was most apparent and very successful too. Working with concepts of national freedom, national development, national consensus, and so on, nationalist discourse even appropriated the concepts of socialism and social transformation, obscured the class character of the compromise and settlement of 1947 and the consequent reality of a state-supported, India-specific capitalist development, and marginalized all radical or revolutionary thought and action. In more recent years, when the memory of national freedom has almost faded away, national development is seen not to be what it was supposed to be. National consensus survives only as a yearning, and the loudness of the nationalist discourse both hides and betrays a real and rapid waning of nationalism. It is the metaphysical mode of thought that ensures the continued definition and preemption of the terrain of Indian politics for the ruling classes.

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The Communist left needs to move away from its simplistic, ahistorical materialism and the metaphysical mode of thought, and return to Marxism in order to recover its essential character as a revolutionary movement. Let it not remain content with operating on the terrain of bourgeois politics alone, responding to the issues this terrain presents, accepting the choices it offers, and succumbing to the corruption of consciousness that all this involves. It is time the Communist left sought to establish and function on its own terrain, the terrain of independent, class-based people's politics which, even as it confronts bourgeois politics on the latter's terrain, knows how to pose its own issues in its own way before the people, to present them with genuine choices, and to organize them to fight around these issues.

The constituency of active struggle for socialism is still very large in this country, and it will grow as the new economic policy of the ruling classes gets underway: major Communist parties, needing to break out of the quarantine that parliamentary politics has become for them; smaller Communist formations like People's War Groups, somewhat differently quarantined by the violence of the state and their own politics, but searching and struggling to reach beyond their limited strongholds; growing movements like the Indian People's Front, successfully making space for their refreshingly revolutionary politics; minor left parties with their committed cadre and their own areas of influence; socialists who are still not irretrievably lost to bourgeois politics; the best of the activist groups, new social movements, and others from among the long disadvantaged but now awakening sections of our people—minor nationalities, *dalits*, tribals, women, religious and ethnic minorities, and so on—who will out of their own experience articulate their struggles with a class-based people's politics; the Shankar Guha Niyogis and A.K. Roys, scattered all over this country, carrying on against the heaviest of odds; militant sections from among the workers and peasants, youth and intelligentsia, looking for a more positive and hopeful politics; and many more.

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The need is for the Communist left to regain clarity about its strategic aims, to develop its own alternative terrain of people's politics and thus recover the moral elan of a revolutionary movement actively struggling for the interests of the common Indian people. This is a difficult task but not impossible. This is what the situation demands as does the heroic revolutionary tradition of the Ghadarites, whose heir the Communist left claims to be. While in the party, I always had the feeling that, with its scientistic view of Marxism, it was somewhat wanting in its treatment of revolutionaries and the revolutionary traditions it inherited, in its imbibing of the revolutionary morals and culture that the Ghadarites, Bhagat Singh's comrades, and different streams of "revolutionary terrorism" brought to the movement. And the feeling has persisted. These traditions were used instrumentally to gain prestige, and what little was imbibed seems to have been lost as the movement progressed along the reformist path. While the young Ghadarites grew into Babas and simultaneously into giants of human beings in their revolutionary commitment, their heirs seem to have dwindled into pygmies lost on the terrain of bourgeois politics. This—like so much else in today's Communist movement—may yet change. One always hopes.

Possibilities of a change for the better are far more open today than ever before. The new turn in ruling class policies and the world-wide crisis of the Communist movement together provide not only an occasion for the movement to undertake a serious self-critical review of its theory and practice but also an opportunity to break away from the past and recover itself as a genuine revolutionary movement.

The Indian ruling classes have decided to shift from a government-supported to a more explicitly market-friendly capitalism. The product of a dead-end crisis caused by previous development, especially the policies pursued in recent years, this shift is an almost natural progress for Indian capitalism, and has been facilitated by the defeat of the Soviet Union in the Cold War and its eventual disintegration. The

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Indian ruling classes have lost the maneuverability that contention between two superpowers once provided them, leaving them more vulnerable to the pressure and demands of the dominant global capitalism. Given the strong comprador and lumpen strain inherent in their character, they have succumbed and opted for what may well turn out to be junior partnership within the global capitalist system. Bowing to the dictates of the IMF and the World Bank, the Indian ruling classes have quite openly decided, as we have already noted, to "secede" from the Indian people.

But this secession of the successful has at least one advantage for the common Indian people, the unsuccessful of Indian society. To the extent the new policies get implemented, they will clarify as nothing else could, the real issues of Indian economics and politics. In the new dispensation—even as a "free market" will lead to greater disproportionalities within the Indian economy, sharpening and revealing its basic contradictions as never before—the turning away of the state even from its socialist rhetoric and symbolic concern for equity and distributive justice will further undermine such legitimacy as the system still has. The globalization of India's economy and therefore of its politics, culture, and much else besides, may in its ultimate outcome confront the Indian people with the choice—socialism or peripheralization within global capitalism. In such a situation the class issues will stand out more clearly, and class-based popular politics will not only become more necessary but also more possible.

The collapse of the Soviet Union is certainly a setback for popular struggles everywhere, but it is not without advantages for revolutionary socialist movements, including India's. They no more need to carry the burden of a deformed and degenerated socialism, no longer are they answerable for its ugliness and cruelties (though the task of a genuine, Marxist explanation of this collapse has still to be carried out). But most importantly, there is no "party of Lenin" now, with its Ulyanovskies and the rest to subordinate the Communist

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movements abroad to the national interests or *raisons d'etat* of the Soviet Union. No longer for us those parodies of Marxism—the non-capitalist path of development, India's "progressive" foreign policy and "reactionary" domestic policy, the large-scale radical renovation of India's national movement and its dominant leadership, or apologetics for the statecraft of its new rulers, with certificates of anti-imperialism for them merely because their foreign policy for the moment coincided with that of the Soviet state.

Our people today face an unprecedented situation fraught with most dangerous possibilities. For Communists who would lead their struggles, the road ahead is indeed an uncharted territory. There are no easy solutions or ready-made answers, not any more. But the situation also leaves them free, after a long time, for revolutionary practice, for a confident, innovative, and non-sectarian left politics in the tradition of revolutionary Marxism. The left must seize this opportunity. This is what it owes to its revolutionary inheritance, to the memory of the countless martyrs of the movement.

Philosophical expositions which cannot be grasped by every educated person do not, in our opinion, deserve the printer's ink expended on them. What has been clearly thought out can also be said clearly and without circumlocution. The philosophical evils which disfigure the writings of the erudite seem to aim more at concealing thoughts than at revealing them.—Frederick Engels, *Dialectics of Nature.*

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NEW ZEALAND: THE WELFARE STATE PLOUGHED UNDER

by JIM DELAHUNTY

New Zealand is a group of islands about the same size as Japan, with a population of 3.4 million. In the South Pacific about halfway between the Equator and the South Pole, it was colonized around a thousand years ago in a series of migrations by Maori people from the Pacific Islands to the North. The next major migration was of British settlers, bringing the capitalist system in the first half of the nineteenth century. Today 79 percent of New Zealanders are of European and 10 percent are of Maori descent. It is a fertile, isolated country, still largely free of the worst aspects of the pollution experienced by advanced industrial countries.

Up to the early 1970s it had developed a society that many New Zealanders saw as socially innovative, a Sweden of the South whose welfare state, nearly free health and education services, almost full employment, and virtually debt-free economy gave it the right to be regarded as a world leader. From its early days there had been a tradition of producer co-operatives and central government investment as a means of development.

Twenty years later the picture is sadly different. The welfare state has seriously eroded, user-charges for health and

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education services have been introduced, public enterprises have been sold off to private interests, a general deterioration of publicly provided services has occurred, a widespread invasion by transnational capital has set in, and an unacceptably large and intransigent total of 225,000 unemployed exists in an employee workforce of 1.2 million.

What has caused this change? Was the post-war prosperity that began to slide away from the early 1970s simply a trick of circumstances? To find an answer it is necessary to go back to the origins of the welfare state, its political and social basis, and the economic and ideological forces instrumental in bringing it into being, as well as those which have largely destroyed it.

The world depression of the 1930s found the country still economically attached to Britain. Over 80 percent of trade was with the "Mother Country" and its dominions. "Where Britain goes we go" was a widespread call. In the late 1920s the depression knocked the bottom out of the British economy and New Zealand went down too. The early years of the thirties were times of great hardship for the working people and farmers. The conservative government of the day was intent on balancing the books, ensuring that the depression was felt with full force by the lower classes. It was in reaction to these conditions and policies that the first Labor government was elected in 1935.

The First Labor Government

Formed from a coalition of socialists and trade unionists in 1916, Labor gained its first parliamentary seat in 1919. The man to be its first Prime Minister, Michael Joseph Savage, quoted Marx in a speech in Parliament in 1919 when he called "not for a fair wage but for abolition of the wages system." Sixteen years later, Labor had changed considerably. It made no challenge to the basis of capitalism but rather aimed to run it more for the benefit of working people by various forms of state intervention. Labor's left wing was able to persuade a rather mixed bunch of Labor MPs to embark on the elabora-

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tion of elements of a welfare state begun by liberals in the 1890s—free health and education services for all, job creation and industry development through cheap central bank credit, guaranteed prices for farm products, construction of state houses for rental, new public works, and forestry projects. In 1935 Labor deplored "poverty in a land of plenty." The state and its bureaucracy were the means it chose to ensure that the land of plenty delivered more to its working class.

Helped by a partial recovery from world depression, Labor managed to reduce unemployment by the time of the 1938 election. However, its social welfare policy alarmed conservatives and capitalists alike. A fear of "ultimate socialism" and "Red Ruin" was emphasized by the conservatives, now called the National Party. Despite this, Labor was re-elected in 1938 with an increased majority, and set about creating the welfare state.

Then it encountered another opposition. British banks were the financiers for New Zealand's overseas debt. When the New Zealand Finance Minister, Walter Nash, went to London in 1939 he met open hostility from British bankers. They refused to roll over the $34 million public debt unless strict conditions were met as to repayment and internal policies. The New Zealand government must not create industry under tariff protection unless this was approved by the British industry that might be affected. Full payment of the public debt would be required within four years. These hard conditions would have prevented the growth of local industry and delayed the implementation of the welfare state. However, the advent of the Second World War later that year changed the situation radically. The war effort demanded an expansion of New Zealand exports and the setting up of local industry. Prices for New Zealand goods enabled the whole of the debt to be paid off by the end of the war, and at the same time a wide-ranging social welfare system had been put in place, both private and public industry established, producer boards set up to market primary produce, full employment attained, and many elements of economic autonomy achieved. Depen-

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dence on Britain still remained, but to a much lesser degree. The great mobilization had not only wiped out unemployment but had brought signs of autonomy as well.

A Gradual Decline

Up to the seventies New Zealand remained a welfare state with continuing prosperity. Post-war reconstruction had benefitted its exports, the Korean war had provided a bonanza in wool prices, and support for the United States in Korea and Vietnam with token ground forces had brought other economic rewards. Politically, there remained a consensus in the dominant parties that a welfare state must be maintained. It was believed that no government could survive if it allowed any substantial amount of unemployment to occur.

Nevertheless there were disturbing economic trends. The ties with Britain weakened as that country declined as a world power. Britain's super exploitation of non-white colonies ceased to be the subsidy that allowed preferential prices to countries like New Zealand. Exports to Britain declined from 70 percent of New Zealand trade in 1949 to 44 percent by 1967. Britain's ability to buy farm products was also lessened by its entry into the EEC, which had farm surpluses of its own. These processes caused small but steady deficits in New Zealand's balance of payments over the years 1950 to 1967, amounting in all to $847 million. For most New Zealanders conditions were stagnant rather than depressed. The National Government became associated with this state of affairs and was thrown out in a Labor landslide in 1972. Labor proceeded to take off wage and price controls for a period of eight months during which inflation took off and a large balance of payments deficit was incurred. It then reimposed wage and price controls but had shown the electors it was not sure what to do. In 1975 Labor was thrown out by as great a landslide as the one that had put it in power.

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Muldoon to the Rescue

Nine years of Muldoon's National government followed. There were, at first, hopes that the overseas stagnation would change and that the world economy, then entering the long recession we still enjoy, would make an abrupt upturn. When this did not happen, and New Zealand continued to slip into deficits and debts, Muldoon embarked on the first of two abrupt changes the country was to experience. His policy, called "Think Big," was to promote exports by government subsidies and develop, in joint ventures with overseas firms, oil and natural gas products to substitute for high-priced products from abroad. Controls on wages would remain to ensure low wage costs and limit inflation. This policy involved considerable government borrowing and depended for its success on a general upturn in overseas capitalism. Unfortunately, world capitalism did not recover and Muldoon was left with the debt and few results. Manufacturing fell off, local markets declined, and unemployment rose steadily. Faced with opposition from unions to wage controls and unemployment, now over 100,000, Muldoon disciplined them by imposing a two-year wage freeze and deprived unions of their right to compulsory membership policed by the state. But union bashing was not enough to save the National Government and Labor was elected again in 1984. Few who voted for Labor could have anticipated what they were putting into power.

Joining the "Real World"

Labor inherited an economy in worse shape than at any time since the Second World War. Labor had made few specific election promises other than general criticisms of Muldoon and calls for the nation to pull together to save the economy. Many assumed that Labor would help the lower paid, but in fact Labor's shadow finance ministers had been working on a tactic that few were in a position to anticipate.

After a show of consultation the Labor Government, led by David Lange, embarked on its new track. It was none other

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than the solution of Reagan, Thatcher, and the Chicago school of economists. Controls were lifted on local and foreign investors, companies received substantial tax reductions, as did the rich, farm subsidies were removed, government spending reduced, import controls removed and indirect taxation on goods and services introduced. These measures all favored capital and hit the lower paid. They were implemented in such swift succession that those opposing them were left still trying to understand the last change when the next one was already upon them. It was traditional Labor policy in reverse, an abandonment of the aim of modifying capitalism for the good of working people. It was based on "faith in the self-regulating powers of the economy for the benefit of all," as Wolfgang Rosenberg, a left-wing economist, has described it.

This policy was greeted with a chorus of approval from the Business Round Table, from local media, and conventional economists. Overseas agencies joined in the praise and a succession of visitors from international financial agencies came to support what had been put in motion. To critics in his own party Labor Finance Minister Roger Douglas replied, "There is no alternative." Former restrictions on foreign penetration, the previous policies of providing education, health, and welfare through income tax were labelled as "out of date approaches." New Zealand had to "join the real world" and do what the IMF had been pressing on debtor countries from Argentina to Zaire. Prime Minister Lange drew some attention away from the economy through his nuclear-free policy and the consequent estrangement from the U.S. government. But at the same time that he was showing an independent stand on this important issue, his government was undermining any economic independence that remained.

The Big Sell-Off

Before the 1987 election Lange told the public that things would be different if Labor was elected again. The following years would see social services benefit from the

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sacrifices of 1984 to 1987. Faced with an unappealing alternative in National, and believing still in Labor's heritage of social concern, the voters returned Lange and Labor to power with an increased majority. Added now to the traditional Labor supporters were sections of the rich and the business community who had found Labor the first regime in years to give monetary advantages to the well-off for the public good. Labor faced its new term with confidence. Roger Douglas promised that "the pain was almost over." But far from restoring Labor's traditional approach to government the administration embarked on a sale of public assets unprecedented in the country's history. State activities that had been corporatized in the previous three years, on grounds of efficiency, were put out for sale to local and overseas buyers. This added to the increasing buy-up of private companies made possible by the removal of nearly all restrictions on foreign takeovers. Labor was trying to choke off the increasing debt burden by selling off whatever public assets it could lay its hands on. Fifteen major state enterprises were sold at a price of $9 billion, many at bargain basement rates. The entire telecommunications network went to US interests for $4.5 billion in the biggest sale of the time. But interest payments continued to eat up the proceeds of the sales, external deficits continued and there was no sign of recovery. Labor had sold the farm but still owed the mortgage.

In doing the reverse of what it had been expected by the voters to do, Labor had undone in the 1980s what its own forebears had created in the 1940s. In the process it had largely destroyed its own party, and whole branches had resigned in protest at what Labor had become. Worst of all, unemployment had increased. A dual economy was being created with stagnation internally and profit for some of the export sector, notably those who had bought up assets in recent years. Labor was soundly defeated in the 1990 election.

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Fruits of the New Consensus

Since that time the National Government has continued to follow the Labor policy, adding its own bias against unions, and further cutting health and welfare provisions. The cumulative effect of these measures has been to further constrict the local market and deepen local depression. Market economics, not a welfare state, is the new consensus. The following table gives some indications of the decline of the economy and society over the period from 1972 to 1992:

	1972	1984	1992
Unemployment	6,000	117,000	225,000
Overseas Debt (millions)	$693	$16,123	$67,030
Internal Government Debt (millions)	$1,532	$13,652	$27,136
GDP (millions)	$6,871	$40,978	$73,213
Crimes Reported	216,416*	415,690	537,300

* 1974 statistics.

The stated aims of governments since 1984 have been to cope with the deficit and restore high levels of employment. The record is one of failure. Throwing the economy open to overseas capital has been accompanied by a worsening of the situation.

Only in the past two years have official figures been released on the value of annual overseas takeovers in the private sector, at a time when the first flush of takeovers appears to be waning. Nevertheless, in the two years 1991-1992 the value of foreign takeovers, or foreign firms setting up with New Zealand assets amounted to $12 billion, from 578 overseas interventions. This two-year monetary total is certain to be much less than the figures for 1988 and 1989, when under

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Labor a total of 3,538 interventions were recorded. My own estimate, based on public sales of assets and the known figures for the private sector for 1991-1992 is that at least $50 billion of assets have been taken over since 1984.

These takeovers cannot be seen as some kind of subsidy to New Zealand capital, but rather as its replacement. In the years 1988-1992, 4,043 interventions by overseas firms out of a total of 4,613, involved takeovers ranging from 75 to 100 percent of the New Zealand firms involved. Frequently the takeovers resulted in fewer workers being employed. This may have been partly due to improved technology and labor-replacing practices, but there is also the suspicion that in many cases the New Zealand operations taken over were tacked on to the international organization of the transnational firms and cut to fit the company needs. Whatever the case, manufacturing jobs decreased sharply in the period of takeovers, while tertiary jobs such as banking and tourism increased.

The transnational takeover soon began to show its effect on the country's balance of payments. Statistics Department figures for 1989-1990 and 1990-1991 show a total of $4,664 million in external deficit for the two-year period. Over the same period $3,812 million went out in investment income to overseas owners, and another $4,027 million was paid as interest on overseas debt. While these figures seem small in comparison with those of many nations it has to be remembered they are to be related to a GDP of $73 billion and an annual export income of about $16 billion. Overseas dividend payments are then seen to eat up 11 percent of export income and interest on the debt another 12.5 percent. Together they prevent a trading surplus being achieved and inflate the total overseas debt year by year.

The period since 1984 has provided a lesson learned even more harshly in the Third World, namely that the unhindered entry of transnational monopoly capital is not aimed at the well being of the local inhabitants but at fulfilling the purposes of capital on a transnational scale. New Zealand has been caught up in a new phase of capitalism, one where

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competition among members of the world oligopolies has been sharpened by the long-term stagnation of the system as a whole, and has made it a condition to their competition that they try to buy cheap labor and resources where they can get them, and sell dear to the middle classes of the First World. The debilitating effect of this can be seen as well in Flint, Michigan as it can in Sao Paulo or Auckland, New Zealand.

A Plot of the New Right

Some local left-wing analysis has put down what has happened to New Zealand as a plot of the new right. Certainly there has been local and overseas propaganda to reinforce what has happened to the New Zealand economy in the last nine years. But this should be seen as the rationalization for what is being done, not the cause. A look at what is occurring elsewhere in the world and at the reasons why it is happening, leads to the conclusion that this is the best modern monopoly capitalism has to offer.

The process has been more noticeable in New Zealand because of the rather swift transition from a protected, partly autonomous outpost of Empire to an area of open exploitation by whoever has the capital to do so. If the country still enjoys a relatively high standard of living compared with the Third World generally, this is a product of its past, and is a condition from which it is moving inexorably away.

The downturn in economic activity has effects outside the market. Economic hardship and unemployment have been accompanied by large increases in crime, including crimes of violence; the prison population is one of the highest per capita in the world as is the youth suicide rate. In a society where collective responsibility has been pushed aside for success in the marketplace, it is not unexpected that many in need look for their private solutions, whether these are inside or outside the law. From a social laboratory for progress the country is rapidly becoming a stagnant backwater of capitalism.

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The Political Results

How have these changes affected the political consciousness of New Zealanders? That depends on which class you ask. Middle to upper income earners have enjoyed the last ten years, apart from those caught in the 1987 stock market crash. They have received higher disposable income in real terms ever since Labor reduced top personal tax rates from 66 percents to 33 percent, and eliminated most taxes on dividends. These classes have been able to cope with the privatization of health and education, or the increase in user- pays. The plight of the lower paid is not so good. They have changed from a largely employed workforce to one where there is one unemployed for every three in full-time work. Casualization of labor has greatly increased and job security diminished. It seems only logical that many middle class voters have turned to Labor, and that many working class voters have become apathetic. Whoever has been in power, the poor have seemed to lose.

As another election approaches at the end of 1993, polls show 44 percent do not know whom they would vote for, or whom are determined not to vote. A preliminary poll on a change to a proportional representation system drew only half the electorate, but 80 percent wanted a change from the present "first past the post" system. Both main political parties opposed proportional representation. These results appear to be based on a widespread distrust of all politicians, which seems justified when the history set out above is considered.

As for the traditional left, it has mostly disappeared. In prosperous times it was small because of the general well-being and it based itself more on the problems and solutions to be observed overseas. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and China as left role models, many left groups disappeared. Strangely enough they have not revived with the deterioration in conditions.

This does not mean there have been no political movements active in New Zealand these last few decades. The

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women's movement has developed and has had limited successes, especially in terms of getting women into prominent jobs in government and sometimes business. Frequently, the advances achieved have been for middle-class women. For the part-time women workers serving at the supermarket counter the benefits may not be very obvious.

For Maori people, too, there have certainly been some advances and a growth in their movements for rectification of wrongs done to them in the past. This subject, like the Women's Movement, requires a different article, written by those involved, to do it justice. Suffice to say, whatever advances have occurred for women and Maori, they are groups of the population that have had to bear some of the worst effects of the long downturn. As ever, economic issues set the limits in which they can operate or advance.

However, there are always possibilities for a new kind of left, as it continues to be apparent that capitalism cannot solve the problems it continually creates. Already there are signs of political growth in groups working in the community with the unemployed, and in groups concerned with the way national sovereignty has been eroded by the transnational invasion. A recent Peace, Power, and Politics Conference surprised its organizers by attracting 600 to a weekend conference in Wellington. These are signs that the consciousness of people in the country is beginning to catch up with the events of the last decade. What we need is some kind of focus, as happened with the Workers' Party in Brazil, to inform and unite an opposition to capitalism.

One of the important factors in the growth of such a movement has to be an understanding of our past, especially our recent past. We also have to realize that our plight is similar to that of other people throughout the world, many of them very poor. And from the unity this can bring we might just overcome the widespread apathy that now exists and take heart in the search for a new society.

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AMILCAR CABRAL'S THEORY OF CLASS SUICIDE AND REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM

by TOM MEISENHELDER

This is a most difficult time for revolutionary socialists. The rapid collapse and disintegration of the Soviet Union, the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas, the many problems of Cuba, and the demise of revolutionary Marxism-Leninism in Africa all force a serious questioning of basic ideas and strategies. It is a time when global capital seems to rule nearly unchallenged throughout the world. If revolutionary socialism is to be revitalized, received truths about revolution and socialism must be reviewed. Serious questions must be asked. Why so many failed revolutions ending in some form of elitist rule? So far most answers to this question wisely stress a global context of resurgent capitalism; however, it also is important to probe socialist revolutions internally.

Socialist revolutions have appeared most often at the periphery of world capitalism rather than in its center. In 1917 the first Marxist revolution occurred in Russia, not in Great Britain or Germany where Marx seemed to expect it; in 1949 the site was China; in 1959 it was Cuba; and more recently revolutions in the name of socialism triumphed in Southeast Asia, Africa, and Central America. Lenin, Bukharin, and more recently Samir Amin are perhaps correct to suggest that a primary contradiction of advanced monopoly capitalism lies

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between the developed core-countries and the exploited periphery. Classical Marxism, of course, placed socialist revolution in the developed world under the agency of a majority industrial working class. Revolution in the periphery, to the contrary, occurs through a different social agency and contains the dangers of a logic of substitutionism. Socialist revolutions have occurred in places that are not fully industrialized, where the forces of production are at best developing, where the industrial proletariat is very small, and where most people are peasants and farm laborers. The current character of global capitalism and the increasing misery that results from the economics of structural adjustment and recolonization continue to create revolutionary situations first and foremost in the Third World. Once again, the future of socialism lies in the regions of the world least studied by Marx and Engels. Socialists need a theory of revolution set in the periphery of global capitalism. Fortunately, there is a revolutionary socialist theorist whose ideas directly address this situation, Amilcar Cabral.[1]

Amilcar Cabral

Amilcar Cabral was the revolutionary socialist leader of the national liberation movement that freed Guinea-Bissau from Portuguese colonialism. Although he was an important historical actor, here I am most interested in his development of a general theory of socialist revolution in the periphery. Born in 1924 in Portuguese Guinea, Amilcar Cabral was schooled on the island of Cape Verde and studied agronomy in Lisbon. In 1951 Cabral returned to Guinea as an agronomist for the colonial service and directed a nationwide agricultural survey. This work gave him an extensive and intensive knowledge of the socio-economic structure of colonialism in Guinea-Bissau. Around 1954 Cabral helped to organize a liberation movement which eventually became the PAIGC (African Party for Independence for Guinea and Cape Verde). PAIGC was small and its core members were petty-bourgeois civil servants and other salaried employees.

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Cabral's revolutionary strategy emphasized the political mobilization of the masses around practical material issues rather than grand theoretical ideals. Cabral tragically was assassinated as part of an attempted party coup designed by the Portuguese and internal dissidents. Eight months later, in 1962, independence came for Guinea-Bissau but sadly without Cabral himself.

Cabral's Theory

Cabral's theory of socialist revolution, true to the methodological materialism of Marxism, is based on a thorough understanding of the real socio-economic situation of the Third World. Cabral argues that the fundamental motive force of history is the development of the forces of production. Each mode of production, based in certain productive technologies, results in turn in a particular social class structure. Colonial economies and agricultural policies dramatically changed the internal situation of the colonies through the mechanization of production and the concentration of land ownership; that is, through altering the colony's mode of production from one based on hand tilling of small or communal plots to mechanized agriculture on large private holdings. Social classes became anchored in private ownership and technical knowledge. High-cost machinery and export production empower foreign capitalists, their technicians, and their local allies who gain control over the economic direction of the country. Colonialism also resulted in the denial of indigenous cultures and identities and the absorption of a European way of life. Imperialism, Cabral argues, is a structure of exploitation where the imperialist power controls the development of the forces of production in another society and thereby takes charge of its history.

While he was aware that imperialism had in fact changed the operative forces of production in his country, Cabral also knew that the national proletariat was very small. He realized that the majority of the residents of what was to become Guinea-Bissau were peasants. The cities were characterized by

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the presence of a "declassé" element composed of a true lumpenproletariat and a group of new young migrants from the countryside. The country also had a small petty-bourgeoisie that could be subdivided into high officials and professionals and a second fraction of lesser officials and farmers. The former "higher" petty-bourgeoisie tended to adopt a pro-imperialist/colonialist politics but the "lower" petty-bourgeoisie may well participate in a struggle for national liberation due to its education and its direct experience of colonial discrimination and imperialist exploitation. There also might be a small comprador elite. This, of course, is a class structure common throughout much of the periphery of global capitalism. Regardless of the theoretical dogmatism of some, peripheral societies are largely made-up of peasants, marginalized quasi-urbanites, the petty-bourgeoisie, and a small national elite. Cabral recognized that peripheral societies are composed mostly of peasants and that it is this class that necessarily would be the largest physical force in any successful social revolution.

Cabral posited that—in the age of monopoly capitalism—third-world movements against imperialism had become the central events of history. Real social change involved winning indigenous control over the forces of production while mere political independence would result in the continuation of imperialism as neocolonialism. Political independence is not the end of the liberation struggle but only a phase within it. History itself, after all, is determined by the development of the forces of production so a people can only reclaim its history by gaining control over their own productive technologies. Anything less is simply neocolonialism.

Cabral's determination of the class structure of Guinea convinced him that, contrary to some applications of Marxism to the Third World, there was no single class agent capable of successful revolution. Cabral argues that the main social class contradiction in peripheral societies was between internal and external supporters of imperialism and the masses as a "nation class." The potential for revolution lies in the forma-

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tion of an anti-imperialist alliance of various social classes including the peasantry and the petty-bourgeoisie. This "class nation" may in its totality only desire political independence, but it alone is capable of beginning the process that might end in a social revolution led by its more radical sections. Only after independence would there emerge a national bourgeoisie and other elites and the "lower social classes," including the lower petty-bourgeoisie and a group of associated intellectuals—like Cabral himself—who provided the theoretical leadership of the revolution. This latter group would be particularly important in a situation without a majority working class with revolutionary socialist aims.

It should be clear that, excluding some Guinean particularities, Cabral described a social class structure common to much of the Third World. Socialist revolutions there must be built without a working class majority. This has been the situation of historical socialist revolutions from Russia to Nicaragua. Third World revolutionaries "must install a working class consciousness in a society without a working class." The majority of the population are peasants who make up the principle "physical" force of the revolution. They may be anti-imperialists but, without ideology and leadership, they are not likely to become socialist revolutionaries. This leadership can be provided by a revolutionary fraction of the petty-bourgeoisie, the class most likely to have had extensive direct contact with both imperialism and revolutionary socialist theory.

"Class Suicide"

Cabral felt that a key to the possibility of successful revolutionary socialism on the periphery lies in the post-independence role of the petty-bourgeoisie leadership of the nationalist movement. Will they be lured by the promises of neocolonialism into being satisfied with mere political independence? Will they merely use their political control to turn the state into a means of ruling class formation? If so, political independence will not bring true liberation defined as popu-

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lar control of the forces of production. If the nationalist leadership simply acts on its own narrow class interest within the context of global capitalism, the petty-bourgeois class will preserve and reproduce itself as a privileged class, perhaps becoming a national pseudo-bourgeoisie. This is a strong temptation for the petty-bourgeoisie in that it allows them to retain positions and powers of leadership after a nationalist political victory. Social revolution, however, requires that the petty-bourgeois leadership of the independence movements commit a kind of "class suicide."

Class suicide by the revolutionary petty-bourgeois leadership amounts to listening to its own revolutionary consciousness and the culture of revolution rather than acting on its immediate material interests as a social class. It must sacrifice its class position, privileges, and power through identification with the working masses. This unlikely event depends on the power and material basis of the revolutionary consciousness of sections of the petty bourgeoisie. The idea of class suicide by the revolutionary leadership is perhaps Cabral's most important message to socialist revolutionaries today. The absence of class suicide has blunted the progressive potential of many revolutions originally conducted under the banner of socialism. It is perhaps romantic to expect the leaders of revolutionary struggles to "wither away" and release power during the transition to socialism. It may never occur. But, it seems clear that if it does not happen socialist revolutions tend toward a more or less authoritarian statism—whether quasi-socialist or state capitalist—rather than true socialist democracy. The final power of capitalism as a global system lies in the politics of the conservative fraction of the nationalist petty-bourgeoisie that chooses to adapt to transnational capitalism because that route promotes its own class interests.

The notion of "class suicide" by the petty-bourgeois leadership at first glance may sound unrealistic but it is much less so than the most popular competing images of socialist revolution in the Third World. Some suggest that "true" socialist revolutions must be the spontaneous outburst of the masses

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themselves. Often this seems to imply that these events will occur without formal political organization or a division of political roles between leadership and masses. The argument is that socialism must be radically democratic even when it is a nongovernmental revolutionary movement or even when it is involved in the long ardors of an armed struggle. This image of socialist revolution as spontaneous mass democracy is much more romantic than the idea of class suicide. No revolution can succeed without organization and leadership. To state that socialism can only come through a spontaneous mass movement without leaders and followers, without organization, without ideology and direction simply is to say socialism will not come.

The second image of socialist revolution in the Third World is that it will occur as a result of a movement organized and led by an alliance of workers and peasants with an "organic leadership" drawn only from these classes. This image, though one I too am fond of, is too romantic to match with historical reality. The lesson of history seems to be that socialist revolutions in the periphery were led by Mao in China, Ho in Vietnam, Castro and Che in Cuba, Ortega in Nicaragua, MonDlane and Machel in Mozambique, and Mugabe in Zimbabwe. Marxist class analysis, of course, expects this to be the case when it discovers that peasant consciousness at best is radical only in the sense that peasants want to own the land possessed by large landowners and when it finds that the working class in the Third World is new, small, and—as a class-in-itself—not yet conscious of itself as a social class with a material interest in socialist transformations.

Peasants and workers in the Third World will only become a force for socialism if they meet a political leadership that knows socialist theory and can present it to them. In most peripheral societies the class that has both the kind of educational experience that includes some knowledge of Marxism and the kind of personal experience that includes oppression at the hands of imperialism and colonialism is indeed the petty bourgeoisie. After all, socialism is a "scientific" theory

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and attitude which comes to few people without teaching, thought, and even debate. It is a fact that it is sections of the petty bourgeois that are most likely to be the leaders of socialist movements in the Third World. It is not romantic to think that socialism will come to the periphery via political organizations with petty-bourgeois leaders that must in the end commit a kind of "class suicide;" rather it is romantic to think otherwise. To be a realistic possibility, class suicide must be grounded in an equally material base such as radically new social institutions that protect the petty-bourgeoisie leadership from the temptations of power and lead it to give up its positions of privilege. This is, I believe, the final importance of the political mechanisms of direct democracy advocated by Marx and Engels[2] such as immediate recall, worker's salaries for political leaders, the rotation of tasks, popular courts, and a people's militia. It should be obvious that if leaders have some kind of permanency in office, are paid a luxurious salary, and claim special abilities they quickly will be removed. "Class suicide" will happen not by the power of will or consciousness alone. It will only happen if the material experiences of leaders are formed by institutional structures of radical socialist democracy. Militarist organization and "democratic centralism" may well be necessary for armed struggle and other periods prior to the taking of power, but they must be rejected by the very design of "post-revolutionary" political institutions.

Both liberation and socialism require bringing all hierarchies of privilege to an end, both those external to the revolutionary movement and those within it. It is better to have leaders and structures that anticipate and are prepared for a post-independence class struggle that includes the requirement of "class suicide" than to deny its reality through the romance of a spontaneously socialist majority working class.

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NOTES

1. For good studies of Cabral and his life, see Jock McCulloch, *In The Twilight of Revolution* (1983) or Ben Magubane, "Amilcar Cabral: Evolution of Revolutionary Thought" in *Ufahama* (1973). Cabral's own writing is well-represented in *Revolution in Guinea* (1969).
2. See the discussions in *The Civil War in France and The Critique of the Gotha Programme.*

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Larry Pratt (Professor of Political Science at the University of Alberta and author of *East of Malta, West of the Suez*)

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LEO HUBERMAN AND *MONTHLY REVIEW*

by PAUL M. SWEEZY

1993 is the twenty-fifth anniversary of the death of Leo Huberman, co-founder and co-editor of Monthly Review *from 1949 to 1968. To mark the occasion we are publishing the remarks of Paul Sweezy at "A Memorial Service and Meeting of Friends" held at the Community Church in New York City on December 2, 1968.*
—The Editors

When Leo and I were in Cuba in March of 1960 we had several memorable meetings with Che Guevara. On the last, when we were saying goodbye, he presented each of us with a copy of a magazine fresh from the printing press. It was Volume 1, Number 1, of *Verde Olivo*, the organ of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, which Che had helped to establish and of which he was as proud as authors and editors usually are when they first see their efforts immortalized in black and white. On the cover of Leo's copy, Che had written a short dedication which can be translated: "To Leo Huberman, who carries out Fidel's Number One precept, 'We must be clear,' this little revolutionary gift."

A more fitting tribute would be impossible to imagine. "We must be clear" was in effect the guiding principle of all Leo's activities as teacher, writer, and editor. And he lived up to it with perfect fidelity and consistency.

This is most obvious in his writings and especially in what I think it is right to call his two masterpieces, *We, the People* and *Man's Worldly Goods*. These books deal with very large and

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complicated themes. *We, the People* is usually described as a history of the United States, and it is that. But it goes far beyond most histories of the United States in telling the story of the people of the country—where they came from, their settlement and internal migrations, their occupations, their class divisions and class struggles. *Man's Worldly Goods* is even more ambitious: it is both an economic history of capitalism and a history of theories about capitalism, showing the intricate interplay between economic life and economic thought. Both of these works were based upon the latest and best scholarly research. It was as though all the academic social scientists had been engaged as Leo's research assistant, feeding him monographs and specialized articles which he used as raw material for his exquisite finished products.

It would not be incorrect to say that one of his major purposes was to make this latest and best scholarly work available to a much wider audience than it could possibly reach in its original form. In this sense, he was a popularizer in the best meaning of the word—one who presents a subject in a form intelligible and interesting to non-specialists. I myself think that as a popularizer in the fields of history and economics he was the greatest this country has produced. And the phenomenal success of his works in many other languages leads me to believe that he had few if any rivals in the whole world.

Leo was much more than a popularizer, but before I come to that, I want to express an emphatic dissent from the attitude, fashionable in some quarters, which looks down on the work of popularization as being somehow beneath the dignity of a real intellectual. What foolishness! The talent and understanding required of a good popularizer, not to mention one of the stature of Leo Huberman, is far above what is required of the run-of-the-mill specialist. And the work of bringing knowledge to masses of people is surely more important than that of adding a little to some specialized branch of knowledge. In a world of rapidly increasing specialization, in which most brainworkers are obliged to learn more and more

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about less and less, there is a crying need for more and better popularizers, men and women who can understand what goes on in the various special fields, relate them to each other and to the physical and social world as a whole, and express their findings and ideas in language intelligible to a literate public—a public which includes, or should include, the vast majority of the specialists themselves.

I say that Leo was much more than a popularizer because it was never his intent simply to make the work of specialists available to others. He also wanted to make the specialists contribute to elaborating and proving the great truths of Marxism. He believed that all serious and honest work in the social sciences, regardless of the ideology of the researcher, would produce results which could best be understood and explained in a Marxist framework. And he set out to prove it whenever he undertook a project. His work was therefore both popularization and continuous demonstration of the vitality, freshness, and validity of Marxist theory. The combination was enormously powerful and persuasive. I think it would not be an exaggeration to say that no writer of the last forty years has converted so many of his readers to Marxist and socialist world outlook as did Leo Huberman.

If the principle "We must be clear" guided his own work, so also did it profoundly influence all who were fortunate enough to have him as teacher or colleague. As co-editor of *Monthly Review* for nearly twenty years, he was passionately devoted to the ideal of clarity. Straightforward language structure, no elitist jargon, no pretentious use of fancy words in place of simple words, no hiding of intellectual poverty behind semantic wealth: these were unwritten rules which he fought to enforce on all who wrote for *MR*, and most of all on me.

Often when the time came to write the "Review of the Month" for the next issue of the magazine, Leo was tied up with other matters and could not find the time for actual writing. We would decide on a subject and discuss in detail what we wanted to say. And then I would stay away from the

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office for several days, or even a week or two, and produce a draft. I had a more specialized academic training than Leo and never escaped entirely from the habits of talking to and writing for an in-group with its particular jargon and its assumptions about what could and could not be taken for granted as common knowledge. If, nevertheless, my contributions to *MR* over the years were largely free of such sectarian weaknesses, it was because of Leo's influence, direct and indirect. He went over everything with the greatest care and hardly ever failed to come up with many questions and suggestions for improvement. The questions usually meant that I had violated the "We must be clear" principle and hence called for more or less extensive rewriting. The suggestions were usually so obviously right that they were accepted without discussion. But even more important for me than his actual editing was the fact that whenever I sat down to write something, I knew that it would have to measure up to his standards. And after a while I think I managed pretty well to make those standards my own, just as a child may internalize and make his own the standards of his parents.

Thus, to the extent that *MR*, apart from Leo's personal contributions, has succeeded in living up to the "We must be clear" standard, the credit must go to him. And I think nothing gratified him more than concrete evidence of such success. You can imagine how pleased he was when a brilliant young Italian friend of ours wrote from Rome just a few months ago: "The most revolutionary function of the Italian edition of the *Monthly* is to be the only political review written in a language the masses can understand."

The division of labor which was established in the early years of *MR* and continued thereafter was such that most editing of manuscripts and corresponding with authors fell to my lot. That was too bad in a way because Leo was an extraordinarily creative and imaginative editor, the kind who not only improves manuscripts that have already been written but also shows authors how to do better work in the future. But he couldn't do everything, and his preoccupation with managing

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what became a more and more complicated business operation unfortunately left him less and less time not only for creative editing but for his own writing as well. The steady growth of *MR* and MR Press during a period which was hardly favorable for radical publishing activities is ample testimony to his managerial ability. There is no doubt that if he had chosen to, he could have gone to the top in the capitalist business world.

Leo took great pride in both the magazine and the press. After we returned from receiving the Omega Award in Italy in March 1967, he addressed a memorandum to me which began as follows:

> I think I told you, in Italy, about my meetings in London with Richard Hart and Pereira of Ceylon. I was struck again, as I have been many times before in talking to people both in and outside the United States, with their attitude of reverence for *MR*. Particularly for left wingers in underdeveloped countries, *MR* is the Bible: they study every article with a thoroughness that is unbelievable; they look upon the theory expounded in *MR* as a guide to action.

As in the old Jewish joke, this brings me both joy and sorrow. Joy because our lives have not been spent in vain; sorrow because we have not lived up to our responsibility. *MR* is a good magazine, but it is not good enough.

The rest of the memorandum is a severe indictment of our shortcomings and failures followed by constructive proposals for overcoming them in the future. "Obviously," he concluded,

> running a magazine this way will take more time. It will take time in the planning, and in the enlistment of people here and abroad to help us. But we must take that time or *MR* will not do the job it must do, and we will merely continue to put out a half-ass magazine.

A few months later Harry Braverman joined us and took over major responsibility for the Press. It seemed that, after a transition period, Leo was at long last going to have the time needed to steer the magazine along the new course sketched out in that memorandum. That was his intention and hope.

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But, alas, it was not to be so. His health began to fail, and death took him from us and from his work just when objective circumstances would have made it possible for him to begin a new phase of a career dedicated, with rare passion and devotion, to what was for him the sacred cause of revolutionary socialism.

That cause has lost its most eloquent spokesman, and, like more than few of you here tonight, I have lost my dearest friend.

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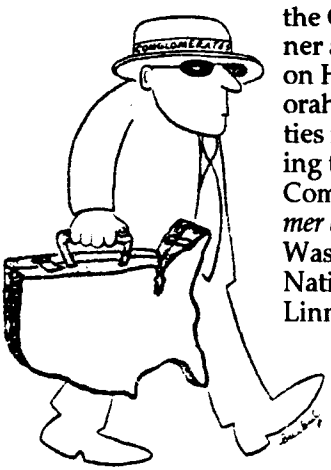

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FRIGGA HAUG'S *BEYOND FEMALE MASOCHISM*

by Martha E. Gimenez

Frigga Haug, *Beyond Female Masochism. Memory-Work and Politics.* London: Verso, 1992.

This is a collection of previously published essays written by a German feminist who, though critical of Marxist theory, considers that Marxism is indispensable in any attempt to theorize the emancipation of women. The essays are clustered in three parts: Socialization, Work, and Politics. The title does not fully reflect the content and is likely to mislead the reader. This is not a book about female masochism as it is usually understood, but a rich set of reflections on women's intimate thoughts, everyday experiences, and their connections with the economic, social, and political structures, processes, and contradictions that shape their lives and create the conditions for their resistance and political mobilization.

While written from Marxist and feminist standpoints, the book is not an attempt at systematic theory development, hence the difficulties I encountered in the process of trying to single out its major themes and arguments. I decided, consequently, to focus my discussion on some of the essays I found most interesting, for they are good examples of what it is possible to accomplish when these two theoretical and political concerns are creatively brought together.

In "Victims or Culprits? Reflections on Women's Behavior," Haug makes the point that women are not mere victims of the circumstances in which they live but active participants in their own

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oppression. Dialectically, she argues, there is not victimization but acquiescence with the conditions that produce it. The family, reproduction, and concomitant responsibilities are the main sources of women's exclusion from the most valued social activities; however, "by desiring marriage and motherhood, or at least by secretly longing for them or striving towards them, women become willing accomplices in their own oppression." (p. 7) By understanding socialization as an active process through which people make choices and in the process mold themselves, Haug argues that women develop personality structures that keep them bound to domesticity. A change in the status of women, from this standpoint, would require not only a change in the conditions within which women develop but also a change in their own feelings and personality structures. This would have to mean moving toward lesser involvement in private relationships (which demand inordinate amounts of women's energies and are inherently crisis ridden and self-destructive) and toward greater personal autonomy and expansion in their capacities for action and self-development. Given that such drastic changes are bound to generate insecurity, women need the support of a women's movement to be able to succeed. The support of other women is essential, given that men, the beneficiaries of the status quo, are not likely to help women develop the kinds of strengths that would lead them away from channeling their energies toward the satisfaction of men's needs.

Haug is not reluctant to acknowledge the positive aspects of women's oppressed lives; the immediate satisfactions linked to domesticity and a privatized life are the rewards that women seek in the process of contributing to their own victimization. It is not clear, from her analysis, why women should desire change or what modifications in their conditions of existence should have to occur to prompt the desire to change. While personal crises might induce some women to change, the conditions necessary for a massive transformation in the status of women are not explored.

One of the author's overriding concerns is the connection between the ways in which individuals, particularly women, experience their everyday lives and the macrolevel structures within which they live. A gap exists between personal experience and impersonal economic and political structures. The result is that, from the standpoint of individuals, the dynamics and corresponding ideologies and forms of consciousness resulting from interaction with economic and the political structures become incomprehensible and boring. This leads Haug to envision "collective memory work"

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as a way of transcending these apparently irreconcilable oppositions. To engage in "collective memory work" is to gather women's written stories and "analyze them collectively," to discover the connections between private feelings and experiences and their social, structural underpinnings. To accomplish this task without replicating the limitations of consciousness-raising groups, one has to "proceed historically." But her intensely personal approach to this and all matters discussed in this volume renders unclear what, at the outset, appears as an excellent idea.

From the observation that there is this gap between the macro and micro levels of social existence, a gap that affects the relationship between Marxism and feminism, Haug goes on to say that women experience "boredom with the economy" (also the title of an essay) because political economy seems unrelated to their needs. But this applies also to men and the entire realm of the social sciences. There is a gap between what social scientists do, how they describe social, economic, political reality, and the common sense understanding men and women develop in their everyday lives. Whether social sciences, including political economy, will wither away in a future society in which social life will become transparent to everyone, or whether the gap between private lives and views and the social scientific understanding of social (and economic, political, etc.) life will always be a feature of our social organization is an important but as yet unresolved question. While the gap could be narrowed through the diffusion of social science views (something that happens constantly, especially in advanced capitalist societies), Haug's solution is unclear, for "memory work" does not follow from her initial assessment: "boredom with the economy stems from our failure to take the trouble to study the ways in which people experience the structures described in the critique of political economy in their daily lives." (p. 15) Writing stories is not the same as "studying" and how can the stories be analyzed without using macro-level theories to interpret them and to place them in their historical context? Haug states that individual experiences can be "productive for the formation of theory" (p. 26) but, given that those experiences are themselves social through and through, in the absence of pre-existing theoretical inputs from outside of daily experience, the whole exercise would not very likely transcend the limits of consciousness raising.

The chapter on "Daydreams" is most interesting and reveals the subtlety of Haug's thought. The notion that women's daydreaming could be a site for resistance is an appealing one that the triviality

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of the examples provided would seem to negate. All three daydreams are about gender relations in which roles are reversed, women are all-powerful and secure (i.e., unthreatened by other women). The surrounding social and institutional environments are only a background for the main goal of the daydream: a perfect moment in which a man and a woman meet, gaze at each other and reach some kind of overwhelming, climactic understanding that renders the aftermath boring, unworthy of further elaboration. The daydream, at that point, ends. These are not utopian visions and dreams about changing the world; they are reenactments of the promises held in the countless media messages women receive throughout their lives. It would be easy to reduce these daydreams to the reproduction in thought of dominant ideologies about gender relations that privilege romance above domesticity though the latter is, ultimately, what "living happily ever after" is mostly about. And one can understand why women's daily experiences of oppression lead to the reversal of gender roles in their daydreaming. But Haug goes further in her discussion of these dreams to point out that the power women dream about is not oriented to challenge their traditional female roles but to fulfill them. Implicit in this apparent contradiction is women's recognition that their powerlessness stands in the way of their ability to fulfill social expectations. In fact, Haug seems to argue, the oppression of women is grounded on the social demand that values such as nurture, protection, caring, and loving be available only as individual women's tasks rather than as socially desirable and socially supported values. In the daydreams, however, women claim power for themselves as individuals. Consequently, their power is not oriented towards the creation of a loving and supportive community but reproduces the privatized and selfish patterns of "real" as opposed to dreamt life.

The section on work contains essays on the meaning of work, the nature and effects of private industry, and the changing context of work due to the electronics revolution. In the essay "Microelectronics and Subjectivity," Haug deals with gender issues in the work place, with methodological considerations for the psychology and the social psychology of work, and with the unique features of the work setting once computers become the workers' "tools." In her view, we are witnessing the emergence of a "microelectronic mode of production." This overstates the case, for the concept of mode of production is more appropriately used to refer to the entire organization of the economy, ranging from labor intensive production to the use of microcomputers and robots. But this does not detract

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from the significance of her insights. That there is difference in the way male and female workers confront computers, and the finding that women are more likely to learn on the job while men learn through introductory courses, are not unexpected findings. On the other hand, her observations about the nature of computer work, and her way of dealing with the contradictions between workers' views about computer work in general and their self perception are indeed most interesting. Computer work is inherently subversive: it makes the underlings more competent than those at the top; it can be seductive for it can allow for constant learning and awareness of increasing competence. It blurs the distinctions between work and leisure, between male (i.e., technical) and female (i.e., clerical) work, and between working and learning.

On the other hand, given that the hierarchical relations between workers and top administrators remains unchanged, and that the technology also allows for the intensification of managerial control, workers do not have uniformly positive experiences in relation to their jobs. Their contradictory working conditions generate contradictory experiences and perceptions. Thus, workers feel anxious, isolated, oppressed. Nevertheless, they will also state that their jobs are interesting while at the same time holding on to the view that computer work as such is a negative development. Haug's method is to confront workers with these contradictions, bringing them inside the research project, trusting their ability to understand and to act upon their understanding. This emphasis on the activity of subjects, the idea that it is possible to build upon individuals' experiences, beliefs, and dreams to develop knowledge conducive to people's changing their lives is perhaps the fundamental thread linking these essays.

The last selection, politics, examines among other topics, the women's movement in Germany, the relevance of Rosa Luxembourg for feminist thought and political activity, and the lessons from the collapse of socialist regimes. The last essay, "The End of Socialism in Europe: A New Challenge for Socialist Feminism?" focuses on the paradoxes inherent in the contrast between the objective indicators of the status of women in East Germany (e.g., high rates of labor force participation, high levels of education, abortion on demand, supportive social policies making it possible for women to work and raise families without experiencing the full brunt of the conflict between family and work demands) and their low level of feminist consciousness coupled with a greater self-confidence than their sisters in the West. This situation leads her to

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ponder whether changes in the economy and the law, while making women's lives easier, in the absence of freedom to choose and in the absence of a women's movement providing women with a different self-understanding and a coherent political agenda, cannot in themselves abolish patriarchy. Socialism, as it was practiced in East Germany (and, by extension in the rest of Eastern Europe and the former USSR), was more concerned with material production rather than with the concomitant and equally important processes of human development. Democracy becomes, thus, not only a fundamental condition for socialism but also for women's liberation.

There is no concluding essay presenting the author's own assessment of the main contributions of the collection. My own view is that, to some extent, the book repeats some of the standard U.S. feminist criticisms of the so-called weaknesses of Marxism, such as, for example, the charge that the absence of a systematic discussion of domestic labor, reproduction, and women's activities is indicative not only of Marx's patriarchal values but also of a bias towards considering important and worthy of theorizing only what men do. It would be out of place here to enter into a full discussion of why I consider such criticisms misplaced; I will just say that I consider those aspects of her work a weakness in what is otherwise a valuable collection of essays that allow us to share the workings of a subtle and exciting mind. Frigga Haug is at her best when she is attempting to unravel the complex relationships between what we do, how we live, and how we think. In the process of analyzing the interplay of existence and consciousness in the realm of women's personal and public lives she attempts, with a high degree of success, to transcend reified undialectical macro-micro distinctions. While we might not fully agree with this or that theoretical point, we can all learn from her research and from her style of work which brings together the personal, the political, and the theoretical, thus joining the emergent body of literature on feminist methodology, a methodology in which there are no objects of research, but a shared activity aimed at transforming the participants in the process of generating knowledge.

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People With Disabilities: Roll the Movement On

by J. Quinn Brisben

Joseph C. Shapiro, *No Pity: People With Disabilities Forging a New Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Times Books, 1993), 372 pp., hardcover, $25.00.

Disability cuts across class lines. Everyone feels the force of the disabled community's reference to those outside the group as TABs, which stands for Temporarily Able-Bodied. Joseph Shapiro quite properly emphasizes the role of Bush advisors Evan Kemp, Jr., and Justin Dart, Jr., both wheelchair bound, in pressing George Bush to sign the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the fact that conservative politicians like Bush and Orrin Hatch have relatives and friends with disabilities, which make them sensitive to these issues. Shapiro himself is a reporter for *U.S. News and World Report*, not a publication noted for exposing social ills, and wrote this book while on an Alicia Patterson Foundation Fellowship.

Yet this is a matter of special concern to those who want radical change in our social system. The at least 35,000,000 disabled Americans are disproportionately poor. Indeed, one of the swift and sure ways to get poor and stay poor in this country is to have a disability which requires the attention of doctors, hospitals, pharmaceutical manufacturers, and nursing homes, not to mention the private and public bureaucracies which thrive as part of the extraordinarily profitable American health-care industry. The poor suffer the majority of war injuries, job injuries, and disabilities due to malnutrition, polluted environments, and neglect. They have less access to

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J. Quinn Brisben, a free-lance writer, was the Socialist Party USA 1992 presidential candidate. His account of an ADAPT demonstration in Orlando, Florida, appeared in *Monthly Review*, February, 1992.

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technological and medical advances, which insures that the proportion of disabled in our population is certain to rise.

Shapiro recognizes the kinship between the current struggles of the disabled and the black civil rights movement of the 1960s. It is a movement that is difficult to bring into focus, since disabilities are diverse in degree and kind. He recounts the struggle of Gallaudet College students to reject the patronage of their governing board and get a deaf president, the remarkable achievements of Community Services for Autistic Children and Adults (CSAAC) in getting jobs for its members in Maryland, the broad movement for the ADA, the current struggle to replace warehousing in institutions with home attendant care and independent living, the efforts of the disabled to control their own medical technology, and the struggle to replace pity with understanding and charity with guaranteed rights. He includes an interesting short account of disability in America and a useful bibliography. He obviously hopes this book will change American perceptions about the disabled, and my hopes are with him.

This is going to be an uphill and unramped fight. Denver officials have placed a plaque at the site of the 1978 protest where nineteen wheelchair occupants blocked two buses to demand accessibility, yet this is not nearly so well known as Rosa Parks' refusal to move to the back of the bus in 1955 or the resistance of the patrons of Stonewall in 1969. In one of a long series of civil disobedience actions by ADAPT—formerly American Disabled for Accessible Public Transportation, now American Disabled for Attendant Programs Today—seventy-five of us were brutally and spectacularly jailed in Orlando, Florida, yet this magazine was one of the very few to give national publicity to the incident. Last October ADAPT won promises from Bill Clinton after we blocked and occupied his San Francisco campaign office. Neither this nor the fact that we could not similarly occupy Bush headquarters because it was inaccessible to wheelchairs was widely reported.

When ADAPT leader Wade Blank asked for coverage from the *Washington Post* for a 1990 demonstration, he was told that "disability rights is not an issue." Wade Blank died heroically trying to save his son Lincoln from drowning in February, 1993. ADAPT's April, 1993, Washington demonstration was dedicated to them. This time the *Post* did cover the memorial service which featured longtime supporters like Representative Pat Schroeder. The *Post* also covered our parade to the White House where we reached through the bars and planted crosses to memorialize the thousands who have died unnec-

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essarily in high-profit nursing homes, our meeting with Donna Shalala, the arrest of 115 of us while trying to meet with congressional leaders in the Capitol the next day, and our blockade of the headquarters of the American Health Care Association, the nursing home lobby, the day after that.

Yet national coverage was again minimal. Last year Dan Quayle's council was allowed to get away with delaying enforcement of ADA with the enthusiastic support of the *Wall Street Journal*, and this year the efforts of the principal consumers of health care to take control of their own destinies is distorted or largely ignored. Private insurance companies, medical craft guilds, pharmaceutical cartels, and nursing homes bloated with Medicaid money are all heavy campaign contributors and have a great deal of influence with the media. Stories as dramatic as the civil rights demonstrations in Birmingham in 1963 are being underreported and partially suppressed. Perhaps a wide circulation of Shapiro's book will get them the attention they deserve.

The human race, which abolished slavery and serfdom, which learned and practiced political democracy, cannot be eternally thwarted of control over its entire social destiny. It may appear a fabled and Utopain dream, but dreams fare more fabled and Utopian have come true.

The dreams men dream in sleep are mist and shadow. The dreams men dream while waking can become the substance of a world.—Barrows Dunham, *Man Against Myth.*

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(continued from the inside front cover)

far beyond the borders of his own country, not least in America. In 1978 MR Press published his book *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays*, a penetrating and (in our view) devastating critique of Althusserian Marxism. In our early days MR Press was also privileged to be the American publisher of his definitive biography of William Morris and of the hard-hitting antiwar/antinuclear anthology *Protest and Survive* (1981) which he co-edited with Dan Smith. He is survived by his wife Dorothy, also a distinguished historian, and by a daughter, Kate, and two sons, Mark and Ben.

We extend heartfelt condolences to the families of Marta Fuentes and Edward P. Thompson.

We acknowledge with gratitude a generous contribution from our good friend Yvonne Pappenheim in memory of her late husband Fritz, author of one of MR Press' most enduring books, *The Alienation of Modern Man*, first published in 1967, and translated into many languages since.

A Washington D.C.-area *MR* discussion group has been meeting monthly for nearly four years and would welcome new participants. Anyone interested should call (202) 234-9243.

A subscriber sent us a copy of a letter-to-the-editor published in his local newspaper. As we read it, we thought it sounded familiar, and then we spotted the note he had appended: "I copied most of it from the 'Notes From the Editors' in last month's (May) issue. Had I given credit, they would not have printed it. More readers should plagiarize *MR* in letters-to-the-editors." We heartily agree. The subject in this case was the Clinton administration's health-care plan.

On this subject, unfortunately, matters have not improved over the summer. Clinton's speech to Congress on September 22 was eloquent and said all the right things about the necessity of universal coverage, choice of doctors, controlling costs, etc.. But there remains one big obstreperous fly in the ointment: the big insurance companies are being put in a position to control the implementation of the plan. The insurance companies personify the ruling power in this country, capital in its most abstract and concentrated financial form. To them health care is not an end but a means. Many features of the plan will no doubt be altered as it runs the legislative gauntlet, but not this one. If anything, the power of capital is likely to be strengthened rather than weakened.

We are looking for a volunteer to help move our bookkeeping into the electronic age. We have both hardware and software, so we need someone who can help our bookkeeper make the transition.

Since it is not for us to create a plan for the future that will hold for all time, all the more surely what we contemporaries have to do is the uncompromising critical evaluation of all that exists, uncompromising in the sense that our criticism fears neither its own results nor the conflict with the powers that be.—Karl Marx

From time to time, we receive bequests from readers who want to help make possible the continued publication of *Monthly Review* as a completely independent socialist magazine. When drafting your will, please consider making a bequest to the Monthly Review Foundation, 122 West 27 Street, New York, NY 10001.

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